



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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Co-operation needed for use of Chinese in courts

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The promotion of the use of Chinese in courts is a mammoth task which needs the close co-operation of the Judiciary, the Administration, the legal profession and academics, the Chief Justice, Sir Ti Liang Yang, said today (Saturday).

Speaking at the opening ceremony of an exhibition on "Law Awareness" organised by the Lions Club, the Chief Justice noted that the Judiciary was pressing ahead with a plan for the implementation of the use of Chinese in the District Court and above.

Sir Ti Liang explained that under existing legislation, all proceedings in the higher courts had to be conducted in the English language.

The Chief Justice said: "The implementation of the use of Chinese in courts is a very important and mammoth task because ours is a common law jurisdiction and that the common law is founded on English. Even our local judges and lawyers are trained in English.

"Nevertheless, the Judiciary will tackle the problem with a sense of urgency, pragmatism, flexibility, realism and determination and will closely co-operate with relevant government departments, the legal profession and tertiary institutions to plan and promote the use of Chinese in courts."

In July last year, the Chief Justice appointed a Steering Committee on the Use of Chinese in Courts tasked with putting in place, as far as possible, a bilingual system in court proceedings in the higher courts by June 30, 1997 so as to give an option to those who feel that justice is best served by the use of Chinese in their cases.

"This option is simply not available at present, although 98 per cent of Hong Kong's population speak Chinese as their first language," he said.

Sir Ti Liang added that Article 9 of the Basic Law stipulated that Chinese must be available as an official language in the Judiciary of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. However, to maintain Hong Kong's status as an international finance and trading centre, the Steering Committee had no intention of making the use of Chinese a mandatory requirement in court proceedings.

Noting that the Steering Committee had already drawn up a seven-phase pilot scheme to introduce the use of Chinese in all courts before July 1997, the Chief Justice said in drawing up this timetable, the Steering Committee had taken into consideration the different levels of courts and types of cases which could more practicably lend themselves to the use of Chinese.

Sir Ti Liang said: "The proposed strategy is ambitious and dependent on the necessary legislative amendments being approved and the availability of financial and staffing resources.

"Implementation is expected to be complex, involving, as it does, the co-ordination of the Judiciary, the Administration and the legal profession.

"Action is in hand to take the proposed strategy forward," he said, noting that "the Judiciary would launch a pilot scheme beginning in May this year on a computerised audio recording system and a transcript production service in both English and Chinese in all eight courts at the Eastern Magistracy."

"If this pilot is successful, similar facilities will be extended to all the other nine Magistrates Courts. The system should encourage lawyers to use Chinese more widely for trials at the Magistracy level in which the legal framework for the use of Chinese is well in place," he said.

The Chief Justice also pointed out that the Judiciary would also launch in October this year a limited pilot scheme on simultaneous interpretation for Magisterial and Tribunal appeal proceedings in the High Court.

Other measures that are in hand include the Glossary of Chinese/English and English/Chinese Legal Terms compiled by the Legal Department which should be ready this month.

Meanwhile, recruitment of court interpreters to implement the initial phases of the proposed strategy is in train, and a training programme is being drawn up.

End/Saturday, March 18, 1995

Yau Tsim Mong traffic safety carnival

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The Yau Tsim Mong traffic safety carnival will be held at the Piazza of the Kowloon Park tomorrow (Sunday) afternoon.

Members of the public are welcome to join in stall games and enjoy performances by pop singers.

Road safety messages will also be conveyed to children touring a bicycle safety town.

The Commissioner for Transport, Mr Raphael Hui, will officiate at a ribbon-cutting ceremony.

The carnival was organised by the Yau Tsim Mong Traffic Safety Campaign Organising Committee with subsidy from the Yau Tsim Mong District Board.

Attention News Editors:

The Commissioner for Transport, Mr Raphael Hui, will officiate at a ribbon-cutting ceremony at 2.30 pm.

Your representatives are invited to cover the event.

End/Saturday, March 18, 1995

Sir David Trench Fund Committee invites applications for grants

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The Sir David Trench Fund Committee is inviting applications for grants from the Sir David Trench Fund for Recreation and the Jockey Club Grant for Permanent Recreational Facilities for Youth.

The Sir David Trench Fund for Recreation is aimed at providing recreational, sporting, cultural and social activities facilities to promote personal development and community involvement, particularly of young people, and to encourage purposeful use of leisure.

The Jockey Club grant is mainly for the construction of recreational facilities to meet the needs of young people.

A single application form is available for the two funds.

Application forms are obtainable at all District Offices of the Home Affairs Department, and at the Education, Social Welfare, Health, Urban Services and Regional Services Departments as well as the Hong Kong Council of Social Service.

They are also available at the Recreation and Sports Division of the Recreation and Culture Branch, and the Secretariat of the Sir David Trench Fund Committee which is responsible for administering both the Sir David Trench Fund for Recreation for capital and non-capital projects and advising on the disbursement of the Jockey Club Grant.

Completed forms should be returned to the Secretariat of the Sir David Trench Fund Committee in room 4015, 40th floor, Revenue Tower, 5 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong.

Applications for capital works projects will close on May 20 while that for non-capital works projects are open throughout the year.

Enquiries about the Sir David Trench Fund for Recreation for capital works projects and the Jockey Club Grant for permanent facilities for youth can be made on 2594 5659 while those about non-capital works projects on 2594 5660.

End/Saturday, March 18, 1995

Fresh and flushing water cut in Southern district

Fresh and flushing water supply to some premises in the Southern district will be suspended from 11 pm on Monday (March 20) to 6 am the following day to facilitate water mains leakage detection.

The suspension will affect all the premises at 135-141 Wong Nai Chung Gap Road, 1 Repulse Bay Road as well as 7 and 88 Tai Tam Reservoir Road.

End/Saturday, March 18, 1995

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

	<u>\$ million</u>	<u>Time (hours)</u>	<u>Cumulative change (\$ million)</u>
Opening balance in the account	2,209	09:30	+80
Closing balance in the account	1,579	10:00	+80
Change attributable to:		11:00	+80
Money market activity	+80	11:30	+80
LAF today	-710	15:00	

LAF rate 4.25% bid/6.25% offer TWI 118.1 *-0.1* 18.3.95

End/Saturday, March 18, 1995

Road safety a great concern to all

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A diverse range of counter-measures taken by the Government to tackle traffic accidents has produced some measure of success, the Commissioner for Transport, Mr Rafael Hui, said today (Sunday).

Speaking at the Yau Tsim Mong Traffic Safety Carnival held today, Mr Hui said traffic fatalities dropped by more than 15 per cent in 1994 compared with 1993. However, traffic accident casualties are still unacceptably high.

He said the measures taken included stringent testing of vehicles and drivers, compulsory wearing of seat belts, education programmes, publicity, road safety patrols, traffic management measures and efficient enforcement by the Police. All these measures helped to reduce the accident toll.

"Road safety is a matter of great concern to us all. In 1994, there were almost 21,000 casualties in road accidents in Hong Kong. Almost 300 people were killed, nearly one death each day on our roads," Mr Hui said.

"The programme to reduce traffic accidents and injuries is on-going. Already in 1995 the Government has placed comprehensive proposals before the Legislative Council on drink driving. We also plan to extend compulsory seat belt wearing to rear-seat passengers in private cars," he added.

Studies of accident statistics have shown that inexperienced drivers, particularly motorcyclists, are more prone to accidents than other drivers.

In 1994, there were 2,908 accidents involving inexperienced drivers, of which 939 involved motorcyclists.

The Road Safety Research Committee of the Road Safety Council is now looking into the concept of a driver probationary scheme to see if it is appropriate for Hong Kong.

The Police have also introduced the Selective Traffic Enforcement Policy, under which they specifically target their enforcement activities at accident black spots, and at those traffic offences which are known to be major contributory causes of accidents.

"One of the greatest weapons in the fight for safer roads is undoubtedly to be found in increasing public awareness of the dangers which we face on the roads. All projects which help in enhancing road safety awareness are to be commended," Mr Hui said.

Elderly Homes Ordinance effective from April

Operators of private homes for the elderly are reminded that the Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) Ordinance, with the exception of Section 6, will come into operation on April 1 this year.

A spokesman for the Social Welfare Department (SWD) said today (Sunday) that with the implementation of the ordinance, residential care homes for the elderly would have to comply with the licensing requirements on location, space, design, structure, safety, fire precautions, staffing and quality of care to the residents before they were allowed to operate.

"The Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) Ordinance aims to regulate homes established for the residential care of elderly persons who have attained the age of 60 so as to ensure that these homes provide services of a reasonable standard and that the well-being of the elderly residents is safeguarded.

"The SWD will regulate residential care homes either by a licence or a certificate of exemption. Licences may be issued to residential care homes which are able to comply with the requirements in accordance with the ordinance," the spokesman said.

He explained it was the department's policy that all residential care homes which came into existence and which intended to start operation on or after April 1 this year should be subject to regulation by the issue of a licence rather than the issue of a certificate of exemption.

"Although the SWD will, of course, consider all applications for a certificate of exemption, it is unlikely that a certificate of exemption will be issued to any residential care home which commences operation on or after April 1 this year unless there is something exceptional in the circumstances which warrant a departure from this policy.

"The main reason for this approach is that regulation by the issue of a licence will better ensure high standards of residential care for elderly persons and better safeguard the interests of elderly residents than will regulation under a certificate of exemption," he said.

On the certificates of exemption, the spokesman said they were to be granted to residential care homes already in operation before April 1 this year but which were unable to comply fully with the legislative requirements.

"The policy of allowing these homes to continue in operation is to safeguard the interests of the residents on the one hand and the interests of the operators in business terms on the other.

"However, the certificate of exemption will be revoked if there is danger to the residents or the well-being of the residents may be adversely affected.

"Section 6 of the ordinance, which is intended to come into operation on April 1, 1996, stipulates that any person, who on any occasion operates, keeps, manages or otherwise has control of a residential care home in respect of which neither a licence nor a certificate of exemption has been issued, commits an offence and is liable to a fine of \$100,000 and an imprisonment of two years," the spokesman added.

In view of the time required to process the applications, the spokesman urged operators of residential care homes to promptly apply for a licence or a certificate of exemption from the SWD's Licensing Office of Residential Care Homes for the Elderly located at Room 2354, 23rd floor, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai.

Enquiries can be made on tel 2834 7414 or 2961 7211.

End/Sunday, March 19, 1995

Albert House free of unauthorised structures

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The Buildings Department has succeeded in having all protruding unauthorised structures removed from Albert House in Aberdeen.

Following the collapse of a canopy at Albert House last year, inspection by staff of the department revealed that the building had 146 unauthorised building works (UBWs) projecting from the external walls, including metal cages, canopies and flower racks, many of which were in a serious state of disrepair.

In order to eliminate the danger posed by them, advisory letters were sent to the owners and occupants on September 27, 1994 requesting their voluntary removal.

The letters were later followed by 32 demolition orders on November 11, 1994 to those owners and occupants who failed to remove their UBWs voluntarily.

A recent inspection by staff of the department has found that all the 146 UBWs have been removed.

In addition, in view of the unsatisfactory conditions of the external and common areas of Albert House, including loose/defective concrete, rusty steel bars, dilapidated chimney and defective drains, the Buildings Department also issued advisory letters requiring the parties concerned to effect urgent repairs. Progress is still being made in this respect.

The Acting Director of Buildings, Mr Cheng Wei-dart, noted that the "rehabilitation of Albert House is a good example of what residents and owners can achieve in terms of improving their living environment and safety."

He thanked the owners and occupants concerned for setting an excellent example in the public interest.

"Our goal has always been to promote and maintain building safety. To this end, private and government resources and time could both be saved if building management, owners and occupants can be more responsive to timely repairs and be conscious of the need to keep their building safe by avoid adding any unauthorised structures to it," Mr Cheng said.

End/Sunday, March 19, 1995

New airport jobs for local construction workers

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The Labour Department today (Sunday) urged local construction workers to contact the Local Employment Service (LES) if they intended to find a job in the new airport and related projects.

Senior Labour Officer in charge of the Employment Services Division, Mr Raymond Chan, disclosed that his office had received many job vacancies arising from the new airport and related projects.

"A variety of jobs, with monthly wages ranging from \$10,000 to over \$20,000, are now available for local construction workers who have employment priority under the Government's importation of labour policy," Mr Chan added.

In order to let local construction workers know more of the availability of these jobs and the placement service of LES, an advertisement will be published in four local Chinese newspapers tomorrow (Monday).

"Local workers may call the jobs hotline 2492 2001 during office hours if they wish to seek more information."

The LES has been actively helping local construction workers to find jobs in the new airport and related projects. As a standing practice, information on job vacancies provided by contractors applying for imported workers will be displayed in all nine LES offices throughout the territory.

The vacancy information will also be sent to more than 20 relevant trade unions for dissemination to their members.

"To make sure that local workers are given priority in filling the vacancies, our officers will advise contractors to relax employment requirements if they are found to be restrictive.

"Contractors may suffer if they refuse to relax restrictive requirements because they will not be able to recruit sufficient local workers on the one hand and their applications for imported workers may be rejected on the other. Applications from employers found to have no sincerity in employing local workers will also be rejected," Mr Chan said.

End/Sunday, March 19, 1995

Teacher Recruitment Information Office reactivated

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The Education Department's Teacher Recruitment Information Office (TRIO) will be reactivated tomorrow (March 20) to help local schools recruit quality people as teachers for the 1995-96 academic year.

Prospective teachers are welcome to register with the TRIO for assistance in finding a teaching appointment.

A department spokesman said the TRIO entered its third year of service this year.

"Last year, it attracted 4,634 applications. Among them, 2,881 were degree holders, 693 graduates from Colleges of Education, 379 diploma holders from approved post-secondary colleges and 681 held other qualifications."

The TRIO was approached by both primary and secondary schools for information on the applicants to fill a total of 1,170 teaching posts between May and August last year, the spokesman added.

"The TRIO sees as its mission the recruitment of not only a sufficient number of, but also quality people to groom our next generation. To this end, the TRIO will this year launch a series of publicity activities to attract both local and overseas candidates to join the teaching profession.

"Career talks will be arranged for fresh graduates of local tertiary institutes to enhance their understanding of the profession and encourage them to take up teaching as a career."

As part of the educational improvement package announced in the Governor's Policy Addresses in 1992 and 1993, 700 additional teaching posts will be needed in this September.

This, together with the number of vacancies arising from natural wastage, offers a lot of opportunities for potential teachers to join the profession.

Registration forms will be available from tomorrow (Monday) at the district offices of the Home Affairs Department and the Labour Department, and district education offices of the Education Department.

Applicants from tertiary institutes including the Hong Kong Institute of Education may obtain the forms at their own campus.

Enquiries may be directed to the Teacher Recruitment Information Office on tel 2782 7021, 2782 7526 or fax number 2781 0206 during office hours.

End/Sunday, March 19, 1995

Huge painting depicts anti-drug message

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The successful assembling of a 7,600 square metre-anti-drug painting demonstrates what can be done by a large number of people working together.

The Chairman of the Action Committee Against Narcotics, Professor Chen Char-nie, made this remark at the Anti-Drug Huge Painting cum Prize Presentation ceremony at Victoria Park today (Sunday).

The territory's largest ever canvas painting is made up of 6,000 smaller paintings, each measuring about 1.5 square metres and carrying an anti-drug message. It is the work of about 10,000 young people from 21 schools and voluntary organisations.

"Together they have contributed their time, talent and efforts depicting the harmfulness of drug abuse through their artistic creativeness and choice of colourful expressions," Professor Chen said. The Chairman stressed the importance of community joint effort in the fight against the drug problem in Hong Kong.

"A concerted effort involving government departments, voluntary agencies, commercial interests and individuals can really make an impact on the situation.

"We should therefore spare no efforts in recruiting our community members in the campaign against drugs," he said.

Aside from schools and voluntary organisations, the private sector has also joined in by turning an idea into reality, Professor Chen noted.

"One firm has generously contributed its transportation facilities in the delivery of canvas and latex paints to all participating schools and organisations, while another firm has been kind enough to undertake the strenuous work of cutting and sewing the 6,000 canvas pieces.

"Members of the Visual Arts Society have created a master work for superimposing onto this huge painting," he said.

"The joint efforts made in the past few months speak for themselves. They show that the community can gather together to beat drugs," he added.

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